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General Assembly

Fifty-second Session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 2 June 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

The President: I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that, as announced in today's *Journal*, the meeting was supposed to start promptly at 10 o'clock. We are starting almost 20 minutes late because many delegations were absent at that time. I again appeal to all delegations to observe punctuality in our meetings.

Earthquakes in Afghanistan

The President: This morning, before turning to the items on our agenda, may I, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Afghanistan for the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage which have resulted from the recent earthquakes.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help. In this connection, I have issued the following press release:

> "The President of the General Assembly has been distressed to learn about the devastating effects of a powerful earthquake that struck north-eastern Afghanistan on 30 May. Welcoming the commitment of the Secretary-General to extend all efforts of the United Nations to alleviate the suffering of the affected population, the President wishes to convey his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to express hope that any further loss of life can be prevented."

I now call on the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): I am very grateful to you, Mr. President, for beginning this morning's very busy meeting by referring to the devastating earthquake that happened on 30 May in the valleys in the north-east region of the country characterized by rough terrain and high mountain passages. Let me make it clear that the afflicted area is in the north-east of Afghanistan, in a region where there is no military conflict. There has been some propaganda that one party was using the earthquake against the other in the armed conflict. This is quite unacceptable; it is wrong and has no basis.

We are very grateful for your sympathy, Mr. President, for your expression of hope that the international community will continue to send help to Afghanistan and for the press release, which summarizes your wishes.

This earthquake, estimated at 6.9 on the Richter scale, was more intense than that of 4 February. Geographically, the afflicted area is wider and more extensive. It affected not only Rostaq, which had already been partly destroyed on 4 February, but also Chah-i-Ab, a town to the north, just south of the Amu river, with a population of about 35,000, and the surrounding villages. It also affected Shahr-i-Buzurg, a town to the east in the

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high mountains, with a population, including adjacent villages, of about 30,000. This area is west of Feyzabad in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan, in a mountainous area to which access is difficult. It also affected Argu, a little town with a population of about 6,000 situated in the valleys of the Badakhshan province.

The main earthquake happened at 10.52 a.m. local time. Had it happened at night, like the earthquake of 4 February, the death toll would be much higher. President Burhanuddin Rabbani made an appeal to all countries and to the international non-governmental organizations for immediate assistance. We are very grateful to those countries, institutions and associations which started the work of sending humanitarian assistance to the area of the tragedy as early as 31 May. From that time, assistance has been reaching the afflicted areas through the airport in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, our neighbour to the north. In Afghanistan, the airport in Feyzabad, situated in the east of the afflicted area, and the airstrip in Khoja Ghar, are already serving the assistance operations.

We express our gratitude to those countries and organizations that have already started providing assistance, to those that are busy launching their assistance, and to those that will be sending assistance in the coming days. What is immediately needed is shelter, tents, blankets, medicine for the injured and food to which people are accustomed, such as wheat, corn, potatoes and cheese.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is publishing a daily progress report of work. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced on 1 June that two helicopters chartered by the ICRC in Dushanbe reached the quake-affected area of Feyzabad early in the morning and immediately began to ferry relief supplies to survivors in the villages hit by the disaster and to fly the wounded to the nearest field clinics. The helicopters had already landed in six villages, from which they evacuated 50 casualties, mainly women and children suffering from fractures, and delivered blankets and plastic sheeting.

ICRC delegates, working closely with staff of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and volunteers of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, report scenes of total devastation and stress that the immediate priorities are to evacuate and give treatment to the wounded and to provide shelter and drinking water for the survivors.

One of the most pathetic scenes was the destruction of a school in Rostaq where children — boys and girls — were studying. The deaths of more than 40 children and their teachers is truly to be mourned.

I spoke about short-term assistance to be delivered to the afflicted area. Middle-term assistance is needed. Since the February earthquake, we have been in contact with the United Nations Children's Fund with regard to establishing mother-and-child assistance clinics in Taliqan and in Faizabad. We have also been in contact with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization regarding the construction of boys' and girls' schools and also of the teachers' college for women and men teachers in Taliqan and Faizabad.

There is of course long-term assistance needed, and I would like to conclude by mentioning these needs. One is the construction of jeep-worthy mountain passages and roads for the transport of people and goods and also to allow assistance to reach these areas in time of tragedies and natural disasters. A second need is small hydroelectric electricity generators that can be used to help the people of the area. A third need is a study of the local architectural traditions in order to help the people of these regions in constructing dwellings that are more earthquake-resistant.

Already the United Nations has had meetings regarding these natural disasters and has worked on many items that would allow us to reach the people who are afflicted by tragedies such as this one.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly again I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/52/785/Add.6)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/52/785/Add.6, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 4 February, 23 and 31 March, 27 April and 6 and 15 May 1998, Uzbekistan has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 95 (c) (Science and technology for development): letter from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations (A/52/910);

Request for reallocation of agenda item 106 (Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women): note by the Secretariat (A/52/918);

Request for inclusion of an additional item: note by the Secretary-General (A/52/236);

Request for inclusion of an additional item: note by the Secretary-General (A/52/237).

The President: We turn first to a letter dated 15 May 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to me.

In his letter, the Representative requests that sub-item (c) of item 95, entitled "Science and technology for development", be reopened to consider the implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers and that the matter be considered directly in plenary meeting during the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of Pakistan, wishes to reopen the consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

The President: Representatives are aware that, by its decision 52/402 of 19 September 1997, the General Assembly decided to allocate this sub-item to the Second Committee. However, on the proposal of Pakistan and in order for the General Assembly to consider the draft resolution annexed to the request as soon as possible, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (c) of agenda item 95 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like next to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/52/918 of 27 May 1998, which contains a note by the Secretariat.

In this note, the Secretariat informs the Assembly that the Economic and Social Council recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", the text of which is attached to the note.

Representatives are aware that, by its decision 52/402 of 19 September 1997, the General Assembly decided to allocate item 106 to the Third Committee and that, by its decision 52/459 of 22 December 1997, it decided that item 106 remained for consideration during the fifty-second session. In order to take action on the attached draft resolution as soon as possible, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 106 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly will now consider a request by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/236.

In his note, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that the Security Council, in its resolution 1165 (1998) of 30 April 1998 on the establishment of a third Trial Chamber for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994, decided that the elections for the three Trial Chambers should be held together, for a term of office to expire on 24 May 2003.

Pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General requests the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-second session of an additional item entitled "Election of judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens

Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994".

Owing to the important and urgent nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that it be considered directly in plenary meeting.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, could be waived?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include an additional item in the agenda of the current session entitled "Election of judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the additional item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly will now consider a request by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/237.

In his note, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that the Security Council, in its resolution 1166 (1998) of 13 May 1998 on the establishment of a third Trial Chamber for the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, decided that, pending the regular elections for judges for the entire Tribunal, three additional judges should be elected as soon as possible, to serve until the date of expiry of the terms of office of the existing judges, namely, 16 November 2001.

Pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General requests the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-second session of an additional item entitled "Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991".

Owing to the important and urgent nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that it be considered directly in plenary meeting.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, could be waived?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include an additional item in the agenda of the current session entitled "Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the additional item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 95 *(continued)*

Macroeconomic policy questions

(a) Financing of development, including net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries

Report of the Second Committee (Part VI) (A/52/626/Add.5/Rev.1)

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of part VI of the report of the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 17 *(continued)*

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/670/Add.1)

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/671/Add.1)

The President: We turn first to the report of the Fifth Committee on sub-item (a) of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions" (A/52/670/Add.1).

In paragraph 4 of its report the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Pedro Paulo d'Escragnolle-Taunay as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on 2 June 1998 and ending on 31 December 1998.

May I take it that the Assembly appoints this person?

It was so decided.

The President: I welcome the new member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

We come now to part II of the report of the Fifth Committee on sub-item (b) of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions" (A/52/671/Add.1).

In paragraph 4 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Sergei I. Mareyev as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 2 June 1998 and ending on 31 December 1999.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the person recommended?

It was so decided.

The President: I welcome the new member of the Committee on Contributions.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/856)

Agenda item 60 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/855)

Members will recall that, in my letter dated 4 May 1998, transmitted to all Permanent Representatives, I attached an annex listing pending issues pertaining to the organization of work of the regular sessions of the General Assembly that require the Assembly's urgent attention and decision, and I also urged delegations to review those issues in preparation for our consideration today.

I should also like to refer to a letter dated 28 May 1998 from the Acting President, Mr. Christos Zacharakis of Greece, that was transmitted to all Member States. In that letter, the Acting President drew the attention of Member States to the text of a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", which was annexed to the letter. The draft resolution was prepared on the basis of resolution 51/241 and the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/52/855.

Let me briefly recall some matters pertaining to the consideration of these items, as well as draw representatives' attention to the urgent issues raised by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/241, contained in document A/52/855.

Neither item is new on the Assembly's agenda. If one looks at the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, in particular at the annexes, it is obvious that the Assembly has several times already, under different formats, carefully studied the issue of improving and rationalizing its organization and methods of work. But the Assembly's potential is still far from having been completely discovered or exploited.

The item on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly was included in the agenda of the forty-sixth session back in 1991. At the following session, the Informal Open-ended Working Group on this matter was established by the President of the General Assembly. The Group was re-established at the forty-eighth session. As a result of the deliberations within the Group, some valuable recommendations were adopted which, *inter alia*, led to the reduction of the number of Main Committees from seven to six, as well as to other measures aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization of work of the Assembly.

A comprehensive resolution under this item was adopted at the forty-eighth session with the view to further strengthening the role of the General Assembly. In accordance with this provision, the Secretary-General was also requested to report, at the fifty-second session, on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution after having ascertained the views and experience of the Presidents of the Assembly at its forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions. In this regard, I would like to express appreciation to the Presidents of the Assembly at its forty-ninth session, Mr. Amara Essy; its fiftieth session, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral; and its fifty-first session, Mr. Razali Ismail, for imparting their experience to the Member States. I would also like to commend efforts made by the Main Committees in the streamlining of their agendas and methods of work.

Some of the recommendations have already been implemented; others require additional consideration. It also should be noted that, in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 52/12 B, the General Assembly decided to continue during its fifty-second session its in-depth consideration of the recommendations of the Secretary-General aimed at the rationalization, streamlining and enhancement of the work of the Assembly under the item entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", taking into account the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 51/241 on the strengthening of the United Nations system.

I therefore would like to encourage speakers, if there are any, while addressing today's items, also to take into account at this juncture the reform proposals of the Secretary-General with a view to possibly reaching agreement and taking appropriate decisions on the substance of the proposal.

Touching upon item 60, "Strengthening of the United Nations system", I would like to draw representatives' attention to some pending issues that require an urgent decision by the General Assembly, as they would impact on the organization of work of the current and future sessions. In particular, I am talking about the opening and closing dates of the regular session, the timing of the first meeting of the General Committee, of the meeting of the General Assembly to consider the report of the General Committee, and of the beginning of the general debate, as well as the need to amend rules 1 and 48 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The problems related to these issues were described, as I have already indicated, in detail in my letter of 4 May this year to all Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, as well as in the letter of 28 May 1998 of the Acting President of the General Assembly, Mr. Zacharakis.

At this stage, I would like briefly to draw representatives' attention to the following main points, which form the rationale for the draft resolution submitted by the President under this agenda item, which was circulated to all Permanent Representatives.

As members are aware, by its resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, the General Assembly adopted the recommendations of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, whose implementation took effect on 1 January this year. In this regard, it may be recalled that, until the fifty-second session, the regular sessions of the General Assembly opened on the third Tuesday in September. The General Committee met on the following day. The Assembly met on the Friday of that same week to consider the report of the General Committee, and the

general debate always began on the Monday following the opening of the session.

In accordance with resolution 51/241, the fifty-third session should open on Tuesday, 8 September 1998. However, as indicated in paragraph 17 of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/52/855, should the practice to close the previous session on the day preceding the opening of the next session be retained, regular sessions would always close on Labor Day, which is a holiday at Headquarters, with resulting financial and other implications. This is why, in paragraph 17 of his report, the Secretary-General suggests that the regular session open on the Wednesday following the first Monday in September. This proposal, as well as other proposals of the Secretary-General outlined in paragraph 20 of his report — namely, that the timing of the first meeting of the General Committee, of the meeting of the General Assembly to consider the report of the General Committee and of the beginning of the general debate be established by referring to weeks within the session, rather than to weeks in September — are reflected in the text of the draft resolution.

Limiting my comments only to some issues pertaining directly to the work of the General Assembly, it was not my intention to prejudge further consideration.

The item on strengthening of the United Nations system touches upon a broad range of issues closely connected to the work of the Secretariat, to the management of the Organization and to other matters. Any comments by delegations in this regard will be most welcome.

Upon my return to Headquarters on Sunday, I received some suggestions which would result in changes to the draft resolution. Before we take a decision, therefore, I would like to start the discussion of this item, and I shall call now on delegations wishing to make statements.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Let me first of all, Sir, express the delight of my delegation at seeing you presiding over the plenary meetings of the General Assembly. We believe that under your leadership the General Assembly will be able to move fast in its deliberations on the agenda items before it, and we wish you all success in guiding us in this process. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his two reports, documents A/52/855 and A/52/856, issued respectively under agenda items 21 and 60.

The issues of strengthening of the United Nations system and revitalization of the work of the General Assembly were considered extensively by the working groups on those two items, which came up with concrete suggestions on ways to improve the practical methods of work of the General Assembly and the Secretariat, which were set out in resolutions 48/264 and 51/241. At the same time, a series of additional proposals in this respect were also made by the Secretary-General in his programme for reform.

In its resolution 52/12 B, the General Assembly decided to continue its in-depth consideration of these proposals, taking into account the report of the Secretary-General to be submitted in accordance with resolution 51/241. It is therefore the view of my delegation that in the framework of our deliberations today we can start this important work.

Turning to the merits of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/855, we would like to note with appreciation the scrupulous way in which the Secretary-General addressed the issue of the implementation of the recommendations of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. We appreciate that most of these recommendations have already been implemented or are in the process of implementation. Furthermore, we believe that the Secretary-General's remarks and proposals contained in paragraphs 16 through 23 of his report should be properly addressed by the General Assembly with a view to making suggested changes to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to paragraphs 18 and 19 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

In this context, the delegation of Ukraine considers the draft resolution submitted by you, Mr. President, to be a step in the right direction and, in principle, supports most of its provisions. However, we cannot but disagree with the observation of the Secretary-General in paragraph 62 of his report in document A/52/855 that the recommendation of the working group with respect to the appointment of the Secretary-General may raise constitutional issues. In our view, the thrust of that recommendation does not imply any interference by the General Assembly with the prerogatives of the Security Council. We believe that it should rather be seen as a helpful way of informing the latter body about opinions that exist among the membership with regard to so important a matter. In view of this, my delegation fully supports the language of resolution 51/241 and further reiterates that in the course of the identification and

appointment of candidates for the post of Secretary-General due regard must be given to regional rotation.

At the same time, my delegation is disappointed that, despite the recommendation of the Working Group set out in paragraphs 24 through 27 of the annex to resolution 51/241, the General Assembly has not achieved a reduction in its overall workload and that, contrary to the recommendation of the Working Group that as a general rule agenda items should be referred to the Main Committees, the number of items allocated to plenary meetings has increased. In our view, it would be appropriate for the General Committee to take a fresh look at the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly in accordance with paragraphs 33 to 35 of the report of the Working Group, and to prepare its suggestions in this regard for the next session of the Assembly.

Regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, document A/52/856, my delegation welcomes the improvement achieved in the working methods of most of the Main Committees of the General Assembly. In view of this, we believe it should be a matter of concern to all of us that, despite numerous informal meetings held by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, that Committee has not managed to review in a comprehensive manner questions relating to its working methods and organization of work.

As my delegation has already stated, today's discussion would be incomplete without due consideration of the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in paragraph 101 of his report "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", document A/51/950. In this regard, the delegation of Ukraine would like to stress that although it welcomes and agrees in principle with the efforts of the Secretary-General to initiate additional steps to further rationalize and streamline the agenda of the General Assembly, it is also of the view that any actions of the Assembly in this regard at this stage should be based on the provisions of resolution 51/241.

This delegation would not have difficulties in accepting recommendations (b), (e) and (f) of paragraph 101, which deal largely with procedural aspects of the work of the General Assembly. At the same time, it would be hesitant to accept other proposals of the Secretary-General of a more substantive character, in particular regarding determining the subjects of the deliberations during the high-level segment of the Assembly, application of the so-called thematic approach to the work of Main Committees, and conceptualization of the agenda around eight priority areas of the medium-term plan. We should not forget that according to Article 10 of the Charter of the United Nations the Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter.

Furthermore, in relation to the Secretary-General's proposal on deciding on the subject for the high-level segment — recommendation (a) of paragraph 101 — it is of great concern to my delegation that, should that proposal of the Secretary-General be implemented as it stands now, the General Assembly might lose its multifaceted political character, which has for years allowed Member States to voice their various concerns in a free and unfettered way. It is also a concern of this delegation that with the introduction of a thematic approach to the work of the Main Committees, agenda items of a unique character that relate to the problems of a relatively small number of States might be practically excluded from the agendas of those Committees.

Mr. Dugan (United States of America): Today's work relates to the implementation of agreed measures for reforming the Organization for improved effectiveness and efficiency. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly succeeded in rationalizing the number of the Assembly's Main Committees and in agreeing on other improvements which have borne fruit over the recent few years. At the forty-eighth session the Assembly went further by agreeing to rationalize and streamline the number of agenda items, of resolutions adopted, and of reports requested of the Secretary-General.

With these measures under way, the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session was inspired by its President, Mr. Amara Essy, to create a working group for strengthening the United Nations system. This group grasped the baton on Assembly reform and that of many other areas, particularly in the Secretariat. Rigorous work towards consensus for such improvements not only drew acclaim last July but also inspired the new Secretary-General to propose his far-reaching reform of the United Nations, which is also known as the Track 2 package and which itself was twice the subject of consensus last autumn. With these many mandates for improving United Nations performance and accountability, it is now up to the Assembly to assure their implementation. Today's review provides us a very good example of a means to that end.

My delegation has been impressed by the Secretariat's dutiful reporting before us today and appreciates the detail and candor which went into its preparation. We are impressed with the scope of its attention to system-wide coordination, and we look forward to continued progress from the Administrative Committee on Coordination. We agree with its various prescriptions for amending the Assembly's rules of procedure. We note our own need among Member States colleagues to improve upon our record to rationalize our reporting requests and the number of resolutions.

As we approach the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, our delegation looks forward to the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, which, as agreed, would improve Member States' overview of system-wide issues. Setting a new tradition, last year's report was delivered orally by the Secretary-General just before the beginning of the general debate. We support this as an effective way of capturing the world's attention regarding the state of the Organization.

The United States delegation takes special interest in implementation of measures regarding oversight and accountability, senior management — including independence of the Secretariat — and personnel and general management issues, many of which continue to be the subject of consideration by the Assembly and its machinery.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the two reports he provided concerning the actions to be taken on strengthening the United Nations system.

As delegations received the draft resolution concerned only last Friday and have not had an opportunity to study it closely, the Chinese delegation proposes that we carry out informal consultations on the questions concerned and then make a decision.

The President: The Chinese delegation suggests to undertake informal consultations on the draft resolution and its annexes which were submitted to you a few days ago.

Mr. Akbar (Pakistan): Pakistan would also like to express its appreciation for the two reports which have been submitted by the Secretary-General for the Assembly's consideration today.

There are several issues in these reports which concern not only the agenda items under which they were submitted, but are also being considered in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on the reform of the United Nations under agenda item 157, under which we have resolutions 52/12 A and B.

We would like to submit for the Assembly's consideration and for your attention, Sir, that the consideration of these reports is without any prejudice to the proposals being considered elsewhere. There are several issues in these reports which are being considered by the Members of the United Nations in the context of the report on reforms and also under various headings in the Fifth Committee.

We therefore fully support the proposal by the representative of China that the Assembly hold informal consultations before taking action on these reports.

The President: Are there other delegations that wish to speak on this issue at this stage? I see none.

As far as this Office is concerned, we will have to take a decision very quickly on when we convene the next session of the General Assembly. While I recognize the necessity and importance of informal consultations, the Secretary-General has to send a letter to the Member States formally notifying them of the opening date of the next session.

In view of the proposal made by the representative of China and supported by the representative of Pakistan, I will adjourn this meeting and we shall proceed immediately with open-ended informal consultations in conference room 3. I invite delegates to take part in these consultations and not to blame me at our next meeting for not observing transparency.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.